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SCOTT - CONDUCT OF HIS MAJESTY'S LATE MINISTERS CONSIDERED



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THE
CONDUCT
OF
HIS MAJESTY'S
LATE MINISTERS
CONSIDERED,
AS IT AFFECTED
THE EAST-INDIA COMPANY
AND
MR. HASTINGS.

BY
MAJOR JOHN SCOTT.

L O N D O N :

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TO THE
COURT OF PROPRIETORS
OF

EAST-INDIA STOCK,

WHO BY THEIR SPIRITED, AND
HONOURABLE SUPPORT OF THEIR SERVANT,

MR. HASTINGS,

AGAINST THE EFFORTS OF NUMEROUS,
AND POWERFUL ENEMIES,

HAVE PRESERVED AN EMPIRE TO GREAT BRITAIN,

BY CONTINUING HIM IN THE

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

UNTIL PEACE AND TRANQUILITY ARE COMPLETELY
RESTORED TO EVERY PART OF IT,

THE FOLLOWING SHEETS ARE DEDICATED WITH
THE SINCEREST RESPECT,

BY THEIR

MUCH OBLIGED AND

FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOHN SCOTT,

Queen-Square,
10th Sept. 1784.

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COURT OF PROPRIETORS

THE EAST INDIA STOCK

AND ITS SHAREHOLDERS AND
HONORABLE SUPPORT OF THEIR SERVANTS

MR. HASTINGS

AGAINST THE EFFORTS OF CHURCHES

AND POWERFUL FRIENDS

HAVE RECEIVED AN ANSWER TO GREAT PAIN

BY THE COURT

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

UNTIL REASON AND TRUTHFULNESS ARE COMPLETED

THE COURT OF PROPRIETORS

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ARE PASSED WITH

THE NEWSPAPER

IN 1812

WITH OBLIGED AND

THE COURT OF PROPRIETORS

JOHN H. COLE

T H E
C O N D U C T, &c.

THE Legislature has at length passed into a law, a bill for the better management of the affairs of the East-India Company. During its progress through the House of Commons, the affairs of India have undergone a very full discussion, and, perhaps, this intricate subject is now much better understood by the public at large, than at any former period. The character and conduct of Mr. Hastings has been a principal topic in every debate upon India affairs during the late session. Lord North very justly observed, that Mr. Hastings had been able to resist every endeavour his Lordship made

to remove him : I may add, that his public character bore him up against an unjust, and absurd resolution of the late House of Commons. To suppose that money could have procured that honourable and effectual support which Mr. Hastings has received, even if he were rich enough, and mean enough to resort to bribery, is so exceedingly ridiculous, that the men who insinuate the charge, do not, I am sure, seriously believe it. The fact is, that the people of England who supported Mr. Pitt, this year, against the madness and folly of the late House of Commons, supported Mr. Hastings in 1782 against the same body ; with this difference however, that when the resolution for the recall of Mr. Hastings was carried, Lord Rockingham was the Minister, and his party had great credit in the nation : of course to resist them was hazardous, though rendered in some measure less so, from their own presumption ; but when they joined Lord North, they forfeited the confidence of the people, and consequently their attack upon Mr. Pitt, excited the popular indignation in a much greater degree than their injustice to Mr. Hastings could do.

So many misrepresentations have gone abroad, though their season for doing mischief is at an end, that it will be but an act of justice due to His Majesty's present Ministers, the East-India Company, and Mr. Hastings, to prove, there has been no corrupt agreement between them; and that if they have appeared to act in concert, it was merely because the late Ministry, at one and the same time, attacked the Constitution, the Company, and the well-earned fame of the present Governor General of Bengal.

Mr. Hastings certainly owes his situation to the most independent body of men in England, I mean the Proprietors of East-India stock, not, as I have heard it asserted, to a few men, who, for political purposes, have purchased stock, and who compose but one-sixteenth of the whole body, even if we suppose what is not true, that every gentleman who has served abroad and becomes a proprietor, does so for political purposes; but from a very great majority of respectable and independent men, who think they owe Mr. Hastings support in return for long, and faithful service, in difficult and arduous situations.

That their confidence in him is ill placed, his enemies have long and vainly attempted to establish; that he merits their esteem, I shall endeavour to prove as I proceed.

Mr. Hastings has served the Company above four and thirty years. Immediately after the recapture of Calcutta, he was confidentially employed by Lord Clive, and, I believe, the only person about him who did not acquire some fortune. He soon after succeeded Mr. Scrafton, as Resident at the Durbar of Meer Jaffier, the most advantageous office in the Company's service, where he remained until he became a member of the administration in 1761. In 1765, he quitted Bengal with a fortune so exceedingly moderate, that though he neither gambled, nor purchased estates, nor boroughs, nor was in any shape of an expensive turn, he was obliged to apply to the Court of Directors for permission to return to India at the end of three years. I appeal to gentlemen who have some knowledge of human nature, to determine whether it is probable that Mr. Hastings, who in the prime of life shewed so great a contempt for money, should go to such extraordinary lengths to obtain it

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(as his enemies have insinuated) at the age of fifty-two. It will be in the recollection of many, with what scandalous and indecent industry that libel, entitled, The Eleventh Report of the Select Committee, was circulated; that it was inclosed under a blank cover to several members of the House of Lords; and that the charges contained in it were artfully brought forward in such a manner, as to preclude every possibility of refutation, because they were declared "to be no charges, though they might hereafter furnish matter for charge." I shall just add in this place, what Mr. Burke declared to me in the month of May, 1782, that there was a direct charge of corruption against Mr. Hastings. I was then, and I am still, as ready to meet it as I was to investigate the case of Almas Alhi Cawn, or the Begums of Oude, from a conviction, that the more Mr. Hastings's conduct is scrutinized, the brighter it will appear. I shall not say more on this subject, than to desire that some one person will produce the charge of his corruption in office, and I pledge myself to refute it. To the nonsense which has been circulated so inefficaciously of large
 sums

sums of money having been expended by me to preserve him in the government of Bengal, and to procure an influence in the present Parliament, I will merely observe, that I am ready, publicly to produce an account of every shilling that I have expended for Mr. Hastings or myself, since my arrival in England; and the world will then be convinced, if farther conviction is necessary, of the gross falsehood of such assertions. *

In the progress of the India bill through the House of Commons, something has been said of the conduct of His Majesty's late Ministers towards Mr. Hastings. Lord North, with infinite wit and good humour, contrived to confound dates, circumstances, and proper names,

* An anonymous writer pledged himself to prove, that I had given one thousand pounds in one year to the editor of a newspaper; but when I publicly denied this fact, and called for the proofs, the writer was no more heard of. Insinuations of the same kind have lately been thrown out in the Morning Herald. It so happens, that the letters of Detector, a Citizen, and an Independent Proprietor, were originally published in that paper; and if I paid more than the *market price* for their insertion I have done it ignorantly; however, I entertain no doubts upon the subject: I dare say I was fairly treated; and I do assure the editor of that paper, and the public, that I have paid at least four times as much to him as I have done to all the newspapers in London put together.

in such a manner, as to amuse, if he did not inform the House. Mr. Fox too, by talking in general terms of disobedience of orders, servants being masters, and many more topics drawn from the Reports of the Select Committee, drew their attention from the facts which I humbly attempted to establish; but I deny that either Lord North, or Mr. Fox, or Mr. Francis, were able to disprove a single assertion that I have made. With respect to the latter gentleman, his predictions have so uniformly been contradicted by the events, that I imagine the public will not place much confidence in his melancholy forebodings hereafter.

I have asserted that the war with the Marattas, and every misfortune we have suffered in India, originated in the American war, and in the measures adopted in England. Mr. Fox made a similar observation in 1776. If the coalition had not taken place, I am sure he would prove it to be true. In the following detail of facts, should I mistake any circumstances, or draw false conclusions from them, I shall be exposed as I deserve.

Mr.

Mr. Hastings succeeded to the government of Bengal in the month of April 1772, by the appointment of the Court of Directors. At this time the Company had reason to lament the very flattering account which Lord Clive had given them of the acquisition of Bengal. His Lordship had stated the revenues too high, and the expences of government too low. By paying annually four hundred thousand pounds to the State, dividing twelve per cent. upon the capital, and receiving bills from Bengal to a very large amount, in a season of profound peace, they were reduced to the necessity of applying to Parliament for relief, and Lord North seized the opportunity of assuming the management of the Company's affairs. The injustice of this act is fully exposed in that memorable protest, which the Dukes of Portland, and Richmond, Lords Rockingham, Fitzwilliam, &c. have transmitted to posterity. The impolicy we have severely felt. By the act of 1773, General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Mr. Francis, were appointed a majority of the Supreme Council of India. Mr. Hastings continued Governor of Bengal, under the Directors

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appointment, from April 1772 to October 1774, a period of thirty months. In this time he had introduced order, regularity, and œconomy, into the government of Bengal, and he had provided funds for paying off the public debts which existed at the time of his arrival. The political measures of his government were, the withholding the tribute from the Mogul after he had withdrawn himself from our protection, and concluding a very advantageous treaty with Sujah Dowlah, by which a part of that treasure which had been so absurdly exported from Bengal was brought into it again. It was at this period that the Rohilla war was undertaken. Mr. Burke and Mr. Francis have not scrupled to attribute this war solely to Mr. Hastings; and they have asserted, that it was undertaken without a shadow of justice; that we exterminated a nation merely to acquire forty lacks of rupees. How gentlemen, who are at all acquainted with the history of India, can venture to hazard such assertions, is to me inconceivable; for the facts are directly the reverse, as a plain relation of them will prove.

In the year 1772, Sujah Dowlah and the Rohillas concluded a treaty, to which Sir Robert

Barker, on the part of the English, was the guarantee. The article which gave rise to the war was this: That if Sujah Dowlah and the English forces would assist the Rohillas, in expelling the Marattas from the Rohilcund, the Rohillas engaged to pay forty lacks of rupees to Sujah Dowlah. The engagement on our part was faithfully performed: but on a suspicion that the Rohillas would evade theirs, Sir Robert Barker, proposed to the Governor and Council to put Sujah Dowlah in possession of their country on certain conditions, though the Board declined the plan at that time. In three several letters, dated in March and April 1773, Sir Robert Barker, calls the Rohillas a faithless and treacherous race; says, their non-compliance with their engagements is notorious, and the only way to compel them is to act upon their interests, or their fears. With these authentic documents, published as they are in the Fifth Report of the Secret Committee, how any man can say the Rohilla war was the war of Mr. Hastings, or that we attacked the Rohillas without a pretence of quarrel, and yet expect to preserve the smallest degree of credit with impartial men, is beyond my comprehension.

sion. The Rohilla war was concluded on the 6th of October, 1774. General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Mr. Francis, arrived in Calcutta the 18th, and assumed the government the next day. To them were added Mr. Hastings and Mr. Barwell, because, as Lord Loughborough, and Lord North have informed us, it was thought necessary that two gentlemen of local knowledge should be joined with those who went from England to a service so perfectly new to them.

I do not mean to enter now into the particular subjects of dispute between the majority and minority of the Supreme Council. The first ship that sailed from Bengal carried a long letter written by Mr. Francis, and signed by the majority, in which every political act originating with Mr. Hastings was condemned: but before this letter arrived in England, the Directors had transmitted to Bengal their approbation of all Mr. Hastings's proceedings, the Rohilla war excepted; and I scarcely think their sentiments on this subject can be called a censure. They say, " Notwithstanding the pecuniary advantages which the Company have gained, we are exceedingly concerned to find that our

“ arms have been employed in the conquest of
 “ the Rohillas ; though we must confess, the
 “ conduct of their chiefs, *in refusing to fulfil*
 “ *their solemn stipulations, seems to have drawn*
 “ *upon them the calamities they have suffered.*”

These were the sentiments of the Court of Directors upon the Rohilla war ; and here the subject would have dropped, if Lord North had not determined to remove Mr. Hastings, and if a very improper degree of influence had not been employed at the India House to effect his removal. The Rohilla war was again brought forward, and most grossly misrepresented. A majority of one voice in the Court of Directors determined, on the 8th of May, 1776, that Mr. Hastings should be removed. Every possible exertion was made by Administration to prevent the Proprietors from interfering with effect in support of Mr. Hastings. Every clerk in the public offices ; every person possessing stock, who could be influenced by Government, was applied to. The interest of Lord North and the Earl of Sandwich was very powerful then in Leadenhall-street, and it was exerted to the utmost.

I admire

I admire the ingenuity of the Ninth Report. It contains, also, some striking truths. To the following I willingly assent, that after Lord North's Regulating Bill passed, "those who were engaged in contracts with the Treasury, Admiralty, and Ordnance, together with the clerks in the public offices, found means of securing qualifications;" and it is fair to conclude, that they voted with the Minister: but notwithstanding all the efforts of Administration, and the industry of their dependants, Mr. Hastings obtained a complete triumph through the honourable and virtuous assistance of the late Marquis of Rockingham, and every independent man in England possessing India stock. At the time Lord North carried on the American war by a majority in Parliament of above four to one, he was defeated at the India House by a majority of 106 in 1784, who ballotted on the important question for the removal of Mr. Hastings.

Lord North did not renew his endeavours for his dismissal. His Lordship knows the secret of the resignation I presume. I have related as far as Mr. Hastings is informed, in a former Letter to Mr. Burke, and till the

Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, or Lord North, shall comply with the earnest request of Mr. Hastings, and produce those powers which were said to be ample and sufficient to authorize them in the acceptance of his resignation, the matter must rest at it is.

From the moment intelligence arrived in England of the death of Sir John Clavering, every idea of removing Mr. Hastings was given up; and however earnestly Lord North might have laboured to effect it in 1776, he himself proposed in 1779, 80, and 81, that he should be continued the Governor General of Bengal by an act of the Legislature; and certainly supported him during these years, though with full knowledge of every step he was taking relative to the Maratta war, as well as of the motives by which he was actuated. I am not at all apprehensive of being contradicted, when I say, that His Majesty's Ministers and the Court of Directors approved of the Governor General's conduct, and that full and complete information was transmitted to them in the Minutes of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Francis, the former in defence of his measures, the latter in reprobation of them.

When

When the first intelligence of the invasion of the Carnatic was received in England, a Secret Committee was appointed to enquire into the cause of that invasion ; and a few months prior to this, a Select Committee had been instituted to consider the state of the judicature in Bengal. The objects of enquiry were so totally different, and the reports and proceedings of these Committees were so totally different, that I must desire to consider them separately ; for though I entirely dissent from the resolutions brought forward by the Secret Committee, and am not afraid of asserting that several of them are unfounded, yet the Fifth and Sixth Reports are fairly and impartially drawn ; nor are any papers withheld, which tend to elucidate the subject-matter of the Reports. But the Select Committee, from the day they met in the second session of the last Parliament to the day of its dissolution, appear to me to have had for their sole object the removal of Mr. Hastings and all his Council ; and to effect this, they had recourse to measures the most unfair and unwarrantable, as I have proved, and am ready at any time to prove again, to the satisfaction of any impartial man. Mr. Fox likes a systematic

tematic opposition he says ; and the Select Committee appears to have acted upon system : the world will judge whether it was a just one or not.

Lord North's administration ended March 1782. It will be in the recollection of every gentleman, with what a degree of popularity the new Ministry proceeded for some time. Mr. Fox had a peace with America in his pocket, and Mr. Burke undertook to remedy all the disorders in our Eastern government. Lord North and his friends appeared in force when Mr. Rigby's balances were under consideration, but on all other occasions there was a very thin attendance. In a few days after this great change, I heard Mr. Burke publicly declare, that Mr. Hastings and Mr. Macpherson should be removed. The runners of Administration without doors were busily employed in circulating the grossest and most palpable falsehoods, in order to prejudice the public against Mr. Hastings. The Secret Committee made four reports relative to the war in the Carnatic and the conduct of Sir Thomas Rumbold. In the Fifth and Sixth Reports they detailed the origin and progress of the first and second Maratta

war fully and fairly; and they very slightly touched upon the political transactions in Bengal previous to the year 1775. In truth, this could form no part of their enquiry. It was alledged, that the Maratta war was the cause of the invasion of the Carnatic; it was, therefore fair to trace it to its origin: but no event prior to it could at all affect the peace and tranquility of India. This will not now be disputed, though in the year 1782 it was so much the fashion to accuse Mr. Hastings of having forfeited the confidence of the natives of India.

On the 14th of April, 1782, the Chairman of the Secret Committee made a long speech, which was followed by various resolutions, forty-four in number, all tending to prove, that the policy of the British Government in Bengal had been highly imprudent, and derogatory to the national honour, and that there had been much improper conduct at home. It was something singular, that several of these resolutions, which were passed in a very thin house, censured the Government of Bengal for withholding the tribute due to the Mogul, and the pension of Nuzeph Cawn, as well as the sale of Corah and Allahabad. These several mea-

fures were adopted in the year 1773, had been communicated to the Directors, of course to His Majesty's Ministers, and had been highly approved of. If it was contrary to policy and good faith, as the seventh resolution asserts, to withhold the tribute from the Mogul, on his breaking off his connection with us, we ought in justice to pay up all arrears, or, at least, to remit the tribute to him in future; but the real fact is, that the English assisted the Mogul when his fortunes were desperate, that they gave up two fertile provinces to him, and made him a remittance of twenty-six lacks annually from Bengal, until, in spite of all our remonstrances, he quitted our protection, and threw himself into the arms of the Marattas. This happened before Mr. Hastings returned to Bengal; and his conduct in a situation which he did not create, but found existing on his arrival, met with the warm approbation of his constituents. The unhappy Mogul is so far from attributing the misfortunes he has suffered to Mr. Hastings, that he keeps up a constant correspondence with him, and depends upon the Governor General's good offices for assistance against the successors of Nuzeph Cawn.

Experience, also, has proved, that to purchase a passage for Colonel Pearce's detachment, was so far from being an extravagant and dishonourable act, as the thirty-ninth resolution asserts, that it was actually the means of breaking the grand confederacy, at the same time that it insured so great a reinforcement to Sir Eyre Coote. Equally unjust is the resolution which condemns the Supreme Council for attempting to procure military assistance from the Dutch, by the cession of Tinevelly. The Government of Madras had written to Bengal, representing their affairs to be irretrievable; it was then that Mr. Hastings proposed the Dutch treaty, leaving the Nabob and the Government of Madras to confirm it or not. A happy change in their situation enabled them to keep the field; they declined to accept the treaty; and the Supreme Council expressed their satisfaction in strong terms, declaring that they proposed it originally, upon an idea of its being better to sacrifice a part of their possessions, than to lose the whole. The first proceeding upon these extraordinary resolutions was, to pass another in a Committee of the whole House — that the Directors should remove those servants whom Parliament had

✓ censured. This, however, was never reported.
 Just at this period some confused and imperfect
 ✓ accounts of the insurrection at Benares were re-
 ceived in England. These were greedily seized
 by the Select Committee; and notice was given
 to the House of Commons on the 27th of May,
 that a resolution for the removal of Mr. Haf-
 tings would be proposed on the following day.
 When the resolution was read, I counted forty-
 three members present, and Mr. Robinson, of
 Canterbury, very shrewdly observed, that it was
 an extraordinary resolution to be proposed in
 such a thin House. Mr. Dundas, who proposed
 it, expressly stated his reasons for so doing; that
 in his opinion Mr. Hastings had forfeited the
 confidence of the native princes, and that there-
 fore his removal was necessary: but he fairly
 declared, that he did not dispute the integrity,
 or the abilities of the Governor General. Mr.
 Fox on that day spoke with great moderation.
 Governor Johnstone, though differing in opi-
 nion with Mr. Dundas, declared very freely,
 that if the Government of this country would
 not give its confidence to Mr. Hastings, it
 would be a right measure to remove him: but
 then it must be done in a constitutional manner,
 by

by bill. Mr. Burke on this occasion held very strong language indeed. He declared, that any man, or body of men, who should dare to disobey a resolution of the House of Commons, ought to be impeached. The resolution was carried, and transmitted to the India House. Mr. Gregory and Sir Henry Fletcher filled the two chairs at the time: but the former gentleman having solemnly engaged not to carry into effect any resolution for the removal of Mr. Hastings, until it had been communicated to a General Court, we had time to look about us; and on the 18th of June, a very full Court of Proprietors determined by a great majority, that to remove Mr. Hastings merely because the House of Commons had ordered it, would be wrong. Again they determined, that the Directors should not carry into effect any resolution which they might come to for the removal of Mr. Hastings, without previous communication to the General Court. No step whatever was taken in Parliament in consequence of this spirited conduct of the Proprietors. Mr. Fox, indeed, did say, that the subject should be taken up in the next session: but a matter of more consequence to that gentleman and his party than

than the salvation of India now happened, The Marquis of Rockingham died on the 1st of July ; and in the struggle for power at home, Mr. Hastings was no longer remembered. Mr. Fox's peace with America had vanished, and he resigned, because their independence was not instantly acknowledged ; from which he predicted the happiest effects, had it been granted, though subsequent events have proved that he was much mistaken in his conclusions. These extraordinary proceedings in England had nearly deprived us of India. Mr. Hastings, after having drawn off Moodajee Boosla from the confederacy, having settled for the time with the Nizam, and secured a reinforcement of five regiments of sepoys to Sir Eyre Coote, was enabled, in the month of October 1781, by having marched a body of troops into Sindia's country, to conclude a separate treaty with that chief. A total cessation of hostilities with the Maratta state immediately followed. A negotiation was instantly set on foot for a general peace, and in the month of May 1782, it was signed by Madajee Sindia and Mr. Anderson, and transmitted to Poonah to be ratified—but now we experienced

rienced the miserable consequence of the Government of India being counteracted by the Government at home. In the month of August 1782, accounts were received at Poona, that the Ministry had been changed, and that it was the determination of the new Ministry to remove Mr. Hastings. The Marattas avowed their intention of waiting the arrival of his successor before they ratified the treaty. Every month brought fresh intelligence that served to confirm them in this opinion. They knew perfectly well, that Mr. William Burke, who had been received with every mark of honour by the Rajah of Tanjore, was nearly connected with the gentleman of the same name who filled a high office in England; and it is a fact of public notoriety, that since the establishment of the Supreme Council in 1774, the native Princes of India pay the utmost attention to the political changes in Great Britain, so far as they may be supposed to affect the politics of India. In the month of November 1782, accounts were received in India of the interference of the General Court in favour of Mr. Hastings, the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, and the resignation of Mr. Fox. Madajee Sindia congratulated

gratulated Mr. Hastings on this happy change of affairs; and on the 20th of the next month the Maratta peace was formally ratified at Poona.

During the summer of 1782, an enquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings was carried on at the India House. Mr. Gregory resigned the chair in August, after having condemned in the most pointed terms every act that originated with Mr. Hastings; and in order to weaken the British Government as much as possible at that critical moment, positive orders were sent for the immediate restoration of Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke to Owde and Benares. In the month of October 1782, thirteen Directors passed a resolution for the removal of Mr. Hastings. Whatever Lord Shelburne's sentiments might have been, he supported this resolution, but it was rescinded by the determination of a most respectable Court of Proprietors; and if any man still believes the nonsense of the Proprietors being the servants of the servants in India, let him candidly attend to the following facts.

When Mr. Fox and Lord John Cavendish resigned in July 1782, the former gentleman hinted in the House, that amongst other causes
of

of discontent which induced him to give up, Lord Shelburne had shewn a disposition to protect East-India delinquents, and that he even expected him to bring in Lord North, but that the nation would not bear it. Perhaps his Lordship conceived, that if he could not venture to support Mr. Hastings, in consequence of the prejudice which then prevailed, it would be right to remove him, and he certainly laboured to effect it. The gentlemen in the direction who voted for his removal, supported it in the General Court. The Rockingham faction exerted themselves on the same account, yet such was the general conviction of the merits of Mr. Hastings, that all these interests combined, could muster but seventy-five votes upon a ballot, to oppose to four hundred and twenty-eight. All the Proprietors who have served in India, residing in Great Britain and Ireland, are one hundred and five, so that if every man had attended and voted in favour of Mr. Hastings, still his majority of English Proprietors would have been very considerable; but so far from there being at that time a general agreement in his favour, I can point out several India gentlemen, added to General

Smith, and Sir Henry Fletcher, who voted for his removal.

We were threatened with the vengeance of Parliament for this prudent exercise of our rights; but when it assembled in December, 1782, the expectation of peace prevented an immediate discussion of India affairs. The Select Committee was revived, and after the Christmas recess, a bill was promised to be brought in: then followed the peace, and the overthrow of Lord Shelburne for having made it; for although Mr. Fox, in April, 1782, found the country "to be in a
"much worse situation than even he had con-
"ceived it to be before he came into office," and though "no peace, could then be a bad
"one, we had experienced so happy a change in our resources in nine months, that the terms agreed to by Lord Shelburne were so dishonourable, it was deemed better to coalesce with Lord North, than to suffer his Lordship to remain in office. This business, however, was not immediately effected, and India was again left to itself. In the month of April, 1783, the coalition Ministry assumed the government. The Select Committee had been diligently employed

employed in investigating the affairs of India, and, on the 1st of April, they presented a Report to the House, which appeared to ignorant men to be intended merely for the purpose of keeping Mr. Sullivan and Sir William James out of the direction, by exciting a clamour against them just on the eve of our election, and before they could possibly have time to defend themselves. If this was the intention, it happily missed of its effect, Mr. Sullivan and Sir William James, came in with a high hand, and then Mr. Fox found out, that though this matter was of consequence, yet it was trifling indeed compared to another which would soon be before the House. That all the world knew there was a very important Report on the point of being published, and that then something must be done in the affairs of India; and then too he would consider the Report which affected Mr. Sullivan and Sir William James: thus ended this trifling affair. Mr. Dundas's bill was never read a second time. At length the famous Report alluded to by Mr. Fox appeared; it was intended to prove, that the government of India was totally defective both at home and abroad; and that horrible oppres-

sions had been committed in India, and winked at in England. Unfortunately, however, the business of Mr. Powell, and Mr. Bembridge, and other unlucky accidents, had so soured the temper of the House, that it was not thought quite prudent to attempt any thing that session against Mr. Hastings, as his friends could oppose to vague, and unfounded declamation, undoubted evidence of the most solid and substantial services: the Maratta peace; the relief of Madras; and the improvement of the revenues of Bengal. This session of Parliament ended as the preceding one, by Mr. Fox pledging himself to do something effectual, as soon as the House met after the recess.

During the summer of 1783, advices of great importance were received from India. The French had strained every nerve to distress us; and in the midst of all the efforts of the Supreme Council to defend Madras, the Greyhound packet arrived with dispatches from the Court of Directors, tending to persuade every man in Bengal that the removal of Mr. Hastings was near at hand. He had long borne up against this species of counteraction; but conceiving there was a determination to force him

him

him from Bengal, and that without support from home, he could not expect to conduct the public business to advantage; he wrote in the following terms to the Directors on the 21st of March, 1783:

“It is now a complete period of eleven years since I first received the nominal charge of your affairs. In the course of it I have invariably had to contend, not with ordinary difficulties, but such as most unnaturally arose from the opposition of those very powers from which I primarily derived my authority, and which were required for the support of it. My exertions, though applied to an unvaried and consistent line of action, have been occasional and desultory: yet I please myself with the hope that, in the annals of your dominion which shall be written after the extinction of recent prejudices, this term of its administration will appear not the least conducive to the interest of the Company, nor the least reflective of the honour of the British name; and allow me to suggest the instructive reflection of what good might have been done, and what evil prevented, had due support been given to that administration

which

which has performed such eminent and substantial services without it.

"You, honourable Sirs, can attest the patience and temper with which I have submitted to all the indignities which have been heaped upon me in this long service. It was the duty of fidelity which I essentially owed to it; it was the return of gratitude which I owed, even with the sacrifice of life, had that been exacted, to the Company, my original masters, and most indulgent patrons. To these principles have I devoted every private feeling, and persevered in the violent maintenance of my office; because I was conscious that I possessed, in my integrity, and in the advantages of local knowledge, those means of discharging the functions of it with credit to myself, and with advantage to my employers, which might be wanting in more splendid talents; and because I had always a ground of hope that my long sufferance would disarm the prejudices of my adversaries, or the rotation of time produce that concurrence, in the crisis of your fortune with my own, which might place me in the situation to which I aspired. In the mean time, there was nothing in any actual state of your affairs which could discourage

courage me from the prosecution of this plan. There was indeed an interval, and that of some duration, in which my authority was wholly destroyed; but another was substituted in its place, and that, though irregular, was armed with the public belief of an influence invisibly upholding it, which gave it a vigour scarce less effectual than that of a constitutional power. Besides, your government had no external dangers to agitate, and discover the looseness of its composition.

“The case is now most widely different.—While your existence was threatened by wars with the most formidable powers of Europe, added to your Indian enemies; and while you confessedly owed its preservation to the seasonable and vigorous exertions of this government, you chose that season to annihilate its constitutional powers. You annihilated the influence of its executive member—you proclaimed its annihilation;—you virtually called on his associates to withdraw their support from him, and they have withdrawn it. But you have substituted no other instrument of rule in his stead, unless you suppose that it may exist, and can be effectually exercised, in the body of
your

your Council at large ; possessing no power of motion but an inert submission to the letter of your commands ; which, however necessary in the wise intention of the legislature, have never yet been applied to the establishment of any original plan or system of measures, and seldom felt but in instances of personal favour or personal displeasure.

“ Under such a situation, I feel myself impelled, by the same spirit which has hitherto animated me to retain my post against all the attempts made to extrude me from it, to adopt the contrary line. The season for contention is past. The present state of affairs is not able to bear it. I am morally certain, that my successor in this government, whoever he may be, will be allowed to possess and exercise the necessary powers of his station, with the confidence and support of those, who, by their choice of him, will be interested in his success. I am become a burden to the service ; and would instantly relieve it from the incumbrance, were I not apprehensive of creating worse consequences by my abrupt removal from it. Such an act would probably be considered, by Mahdajee Sindia, as a desertion of him in the instant of

his

his accomplishment of the treaty, and defeat the purposes of it, which remain yet to be effected by his agency. I am also persuaded that it would be attended with the loss of the commander in chief, in whose presence alone I look for the restoration of peace to the Carnatic, which he, perhaps, would think too hazardous an undertaking with no other support than that of a broken government. I have now no wish remaining, but to see the close of this calamitous scene, and for that I hope a few months will be sufficient. My services may afterwards be safely withdrawn; but will still be due, in my conception of what I owe to my first constituents, until they can be regularly supplied by those of my appointed successor, or until his succession shall have been made known, and the interval but short for his arrival.

“ It therefore remains to perform the duty which I had assigned to myself as the final purpose of this letter; to declare, as I now most formally do, that it is my desire that you will be pleased to obtain the early nomination of a person to succeed me in the government of Fort William; to declare that it is my intention to resign your service as soon as I can do it with-

out prejudice to your affairs, after the allowance of a competent time for your choice of a person to succeed me; and to declare, that if, in the intermediate time, you shall proceed to order the restoration of Rajah Cheyt Sing to the Zemindary, from which, by the powers I legally possessed, and conceive myself legally bound to assert, against any subsequent authority to the contrary derived from the same common source, he was dispossessed for crimes of the greatest enormity, and your Council shall resolve to execute the order; I will instantly give up my station and the service."

However desirous the friends of Mr. Hastings might have been to retain him in the government of Bengal, here was an earnest request from himself to be relieved. No step was taken either by the Directors or his Majesty's Ministers in consequence of it. The letter was received in September last, and the following month the Court of Proprietors voted him their thanks for his services; to which they added, a request that he would not resign until the complete restoration of peace in India, and the arrangements in consequence of it had taken place.

This

This was the precise situation of affairs when the late House of Commons met on the 14th of November. When the resolution passed in a thin House in May 1782 for the recall of Mr. Hastings, we were at war with the Marattas, with Hyder Ally, the French, and the Dutch. A strange idea prevailed, that Mr. Hastings had forfeited the confidence of the native Princes, and that his removal was necessary, as a step preparatory to peace. Subsequent events had proved the fallacy of this opinion. Mr. Hastings made the Maratta peace; he relieved the Carnatic; Hyder was dead; and a peace had been concluded in Europe; Bengal was in a perfect state of tranquillity; and the revenues were annually improving.

On the first day of the session, the 11th of November, Mr. Fox informed the House, that he would open the heads of a bill for the government of India on the following Tuesday. Every possible exertion was made to insure success to his plan; a very artful pamphlet had been published, and generally distributed previous to the meeting of Parliament, in which the grossest misrepresentation were inserted, in order to prejudice the public against the East-India Company and

Mr. Hastings*. The newspapers were well supplied with paragraphs tending to the same end. The Select Committee, a very few days after they assembled, published their Eleventh Report without an Appendix. This was instantly re-printed by Mr. Debrett, who during the summer had printed the Ninth Report also; and lest the world should want an inducement to read them, they were advertised as containing an account of the conduct of Mr. Hastings, and of money acknowledged to have been received by him. These Reports were sent to the present Lord Chancellor, amongst other Peers, under a blank cover. Is it therefore extraordinary, that feeling an honest indignation at a proceeding so scandalous, his Lord-

* A considerable part of this pamphlet is very much in the style of Mr. Fox's speech when he opened his plan. Speaking of the Select Committee, the writer says, "This Committee is composed of gentlemen of the most unfulled probity and first-rate talents, whose knowledge of the subject cannot be questioned, and whose industry and perseverance are only to be equalled by their candour and fairness. To distinguish individuals without naming the whole, would be invidious. The proceedings of this highly respectable Committee have been always open and public. The testimony of witnesses has been taken in the most solemn manner."

These are a few of the compliments paid to the Select Committee; and the author then gives up some extracts from the Ninth Report, which he styles an "invaluable document."

ship should have declared, that to such Reports
 “ he would pay as much attention as to the
 “ Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.”

On the 18th of November, Mr. Fox, in a
 very long speech, opened his plan. Instead of at-
 tributing the temporary distress of the East-India
 Company to their true causes, the American
 war, and the pernicious interference of Ministers,
 which no man formerly reprobated in harsher
 terms than himself, he now declared, that our
 misfortunes were owing to the mismanagement
 of Mr. Hastings in India, and to the support
 which he met with from his agents and depen-
 dents at home. In the course of his speech,
 he went through all the unfounded charges
 that have been insinuated in the Reports of the
 Select Committee; and after describing Mr.
 Hastings as a corrupt, ambitious, and unprin-
 cipated Governor, he moved for leave to bring
 in a bill not to remove, not to punish the Go-
 vernor, but totally to annihilate the privileges
 of his constituents, for which he assigned two
 curious reasons; the one, that the Proprietors
 were become the servants, of the servants in In-
 dia; the other, that they were unfit, by their
 constitution, for the management of an em-

pire. The first is one amongst many fanciful ideas which are to be found in the Ninth Report; but to prove the truth of it, nothing like the shadow of an argument has ever yet been offered. To mention the conquests acquired during the war by the East-India Company, and the honourable manner in which they have terminated it, would be the completest answer that could possibly be given to the second assertion. During the many discussions that this famous bill received in the House of Commons, Mr. Fox and his friends varied their ground very often. They explained away, in some measure, what had been said of the bankruptcy of the Company. It had been stated in all the newspapers that Mr. Fox declared, we had but three millions two hundred thousand pounds to pay a debt of above eleven millions. This sunk the stock near fifteen per cent. in one day.

It is impossible not to take notice of a very curious circumstance which passed on the day the bill was read a second time: Mr. Fox disputed the items of the Company's account, article by article, in the most ingenious and entertaining speech I ever heard. The Company

had stated the amount of their cash, bonds, and notes, to be above six hundred thousand pounds, then lying in their Treasury in Leadenhall Street.

After a few items more, there was the following “Silver remaining in the Treasury for “exportation — one thousand and ninety “pounds.” There cannot be a greater proof of the advantage acquired by this nation, from the acquisition of Bengal, than the following: — That from the commencement of the present century to the year 1764, the average of silver exported was near 400,000*l.* each year; but from 1764 to the present time, it is a mere trifle. A considerable quantity of specie has been brought into the kingdom from India since 1764. But how did Mr. Fox turn this? He appeared totally to forget the former sum of cash in the Treasury, six hundred thousand pounds, and observed, “The next item was, silver remaining in the “Treasury, 1090*l.* The only notice which he “meant to take of this article was, to declare “his astonishment, or, rather indeed, not his “astonishment, but to point it out as a fact “which proved his statement of their finances

“ to

“ to be right. After enumerating their millions
 “ afloat, their millions in the warehouses, they
 “ came to the calculation of their specie, and it
 “ amounted to the sum of 1090l. This re-
 “ minded him of an article in one of our Great
 “ Bard’s best plays, where, speaking of one of
 “ his best characters, it is said, ‘ So much for
 “ sack — so much for sugar — so much for
 “ burnt hock — so much for this, and so much
 “ for that ; but for the solid, the substantial,
 “ the staff of life — bread, one halfpenny.’ So
 “ it was with this flourishing Company : they
 “ had millions of goods, of bonds, of debts ;
 “ but of silver they had one solitary thousand
 “ pounds.”

This remark was received with the strongest
 signs of approbation in the House : it was re-
 peated in every newspaper the following day ;
 and I am sure the first impression the Public
 received was, that the Company’s Treasury
 contained but a solitary thousand pounds on the
 28th of November last.

The preamble of Mr. Fox’s bill runs thus :
 “ Whereas disorders of an alarming nature and
 “ magnitude have long prevailed, and do still
 “ continue and *increase*, in the management of
 “ the

“ the territorial possessions, the revenues, and
 “ commerce of this kingdom in the East In-
 “ dies, by means whereof the prosperity of
 “ the natives hath been greatly diminished, and
 “ the valuable interests of this nation, in the
 “ said territorial revenues, &c. have been ma-
 “ terially impaired, *and would fall into utter*
 “ *ruin*, if an immediate and fitting remedy
 “ were not provided.” The arguments of Mr.
 Fox and his friends intirely coincided with the
 spirit of this preamble *. Mr. Hastings and
 Sir Eyre Coote were declared not to wish for
 peace. † They persecuted the excellent Lord
 Macartney, because he was desirous of accom-
 plishing it. God only knew whether that no-
 ble Lord had not shared the fate of Lord Pigot.
 It was doubtful whether India could be saved at
 all, or peace restored ; but it was only to be

* Mr. Fox. “ The seeds of war were already sown in India ;
 and a note left by Sir Eyre Coote, a man who deserved every
 possible praise, independent of his gallant actions, afforded
 alarming proofs of it.”

† Mr. Fox. “ Did the House know of the disputes in our
 Presidencies ? That Lord Macartney, that great and exalted
 man, the only man who paid obedience to his constituents,
 was at this instant perhaps removed, confined, perhaps come
 to the fate of Lord Pigot ? ” — Vide Debrett's Debates for
 November, 1783, pages 160 and 171.

effected, if possible to be effected, by an immediate change of system; and therefore the bill ought to pass without delay. This was the language of its supporters; and when, happily for the nation, it was thrown out, they presented an address to the Throne, in which they say, "That the disorders prevailing in the East Indies call aloud for *instant* reformation."

On the same day that Mr. Fox moved for leave to bring in his bill, a packet failed from Bengal, conveying to us the fullest proofs that the state of India was at that time the very reverse of what it had been represented, and that the only difficulties the Government of Bengal laboured under were occasioned by the absurd conduct of His Majesty's Ministers at home. We learnt that on the 18th of November the Carnatic had been nearly evacuated; that the conditions of the peace with the Marattas had been faithfully executed on both sides; that we had concluded an eventual treaty with them, in order to compel Tippoo Sultaun to accept of reasonable terms; and that the only object of concluding that treaty was to accelerate the peace with him. That our army had been considerably reduced, and that farther reductions

ductions were determined upon as soon as our foreign detachments should reach Bengal. That the Supreme Council, though highly disapproving the conduct of Lord Macartney, had determined to await the decision of the Court of Directors. This was the actual situation of affairs in India at the moment the late Ministry proposed so violent a measure. Subsequent advices have been still more favourable; and there is not a man of common understanding in England who must not see that the preamble of the India bill was founded in misinformation, or that His Majesty's late Ministers were determined to exaggerate the distresses they had themselves created, in order to seized the patronage and property of the East-India Company for their own security. That we have participated in the calamities which have nearly overwhelmed this country is certain — That the prodigious efforts made by France to dispossess us of India, could not have been so successfully repelled without great and enormous expences, no man will doubt — That in so long a war, some individuals must have acquired money is true; but what proportion do the fortunes lately gained in India bear to the acquisitions of individuals in England

during the unfortunate American war? Yet it was the fashion, last winter, for Mr. Fox and his friends to hurl the thunder of their eloquence at the devoted East-India Company. — If any impartial man examines the funds of the Company, I am sure he will form a patriotic wish, that this nation may have as fair a prospect of being extricated out of all her difficulties as the East-India Company has at the present moment.

The India bill passed the House of Commons by a prodigious majority. — Mr. Macdonald very shrewdly observed, that to carry this enormous design through, three different grounds had been laid on three different days. On the first day, it was the supposed misconduct of Mr. Hastings: on the second, the supposed bankruptcy of the Company; and on the third, a radical defect in the present system.

Lord John Cavendish asserted, “that the bill
 “was such a measure as the situation of affairs
 “required. Nobody but a child, or a trifler,
 “would think of continuing the present consti-
 “tution of the India Company.” I have too good an opinion of the integrity and honour of Lord John Cavendish, to suppose he would
 have

have made such a declaration, unless he had been convinced at the time of the truth of it. The same observation I apply to the other gentlemen who supported it; but it is now proved, beyond contradiction, that the House and the Public were egregiously misled, since every ship that has arrived from India during the summer, has brought full and complete proof, that our affairs, so far from being in danger of falling into "*utter ruin*," are in a state of prosperity, which far exceeds the hopes of the most sanguine of our well wishers.

In the House of Lords, the same arguments that had been so successfully urged in the House of Commons were repeated, but with very different effect. The Company were patiently heard by their Counsel, and they proved to the satisfaction of every impartial man, that the preamble of the bill was totally unfounded. The support the bill met with was exceedingly feeble; but the speeches of the Duke of Richmond, Lords Thurlow, Camden, Walsingham, and other noble Lords, in reprobation of such a system as the bill went to establish, effectually convinced the House and the Public, that they had been hitherto grossly deceived.

The

The Lord Chancellor in particular, most happily exposed the absurdity and the iniquity of punishing the Company, for the alledged misconduct of Mr. Hastings, and fairly declared, that it would be scandalous in the highest degree to permit Mr. Hastings to escape if he was guilty, or to brand him with the name of delinquent if innocent. If Mr. Hastings, or his friends in his absence, had ever deprecated the vengeance of his opponents, *if they had bargained for his safety by continuing to stand neuter at this critical moment*, there might have been some ground to suppose, that his conduct would not bear a scrutiny; but this was so far from being the case, that Mr. Hastings has said, “if I have violated the national faith, no punishment short of death can atone for the injury which the interest and credit of the State has sustained*.” This is the language

* Many are the honourable testimonies of esteem and regard which Mr. Hastings has received from gentlemen who are utter strangers to him, and totally unconnected with the politics of India. The following much-admired passages are extracted from the letters of Mr. Day to Mr. Burke, published under the signature of Marius.

I must confess it strikes me with no little idea “of the inconstancy of human greatness, and the stupendous revolutions

guage of Mr. Hastings in India; the language of his friends in England has been the same; Mr. Fox, if he really thought Mr. Hastings “an usurper and a scourge to mankind, a
“cruel

“tions that have happened in our age of wonders,” when I see a set of men, who have just lost Thirteen Provinces, sitting in judgement upon, and dispossessing those, who have added to the British empire “281,412 square miles, which form a territory larger than any European dominion, Russia and Turkey excepted.” Whatever may be now advanced by interest or malevolence about the crimes or incapacity of the Company’s servants, is amply confuted by the unexaggerated detail of events. What stronger evidence can be given of the solid basis upon which any human power is founded, than its capacity to resist and triumph over the mightiest attacks? This even, exclusively, is the boast of the East-India Company. With every disadvantage of difficulty and distance, it has prevailed not only over the feeble opposition of Asiatic Princes, but over all the efforts of one of the most politic and warlike nations in the universe. Could this have been effected without a spirit both of counsel and of enterprise? No; whatever may be the representations of parliamentary orators, the world at large will refute the wild and chimerical accusation. Whatever may be the demerits of the Company, whatever the catalogue of its crimes, the comparative series of its Ministers may certainly vie with that of any modern government in Europe. It has undoubtedly produced warriors of intrepid minds, and heroes of immortal fame; chiefs that have dared in their employers’ and country’s cause, all that men can dare, that have executed every thing which the present colleagues of Mr. Burke *have failed to do*. Even now, “on evil days, though fallen, and evil tongues,” it can boast of characters that would do honour to any nation; the foremost of whom is that very culprit that seems singly like an electric rod upon a noble edifice, to have protected
the

“cruel and a desperate man, whom from his heart and soul he detested and execrated*,” has acted, as a public man, most unwarrantably. The honour of the nation is concerned not to permit an usurper to escape with impunity, and supported by so powerful a majority as Mr. Fox lately was, if he could have substantiated a single charge against Mr. Hastings, he could have removed him instantly by bill. To say that Mr. Hastings had an influence in Parliament to bear him up against the eloquence and power of Mr. Fox, if he had been “a notorious delinquent,” would be to impose upon mankind. During the madness of the Rockingham Administration, when the House of Commons passed a resolution, “that it was the duty of the Directors to recal Mr. Hastings;” no gentleman offered to divide the House, and the observations made upon

the building beneath, while he attracts the fury of the tempest upon himself. Yet even he, “scathed” as he may appear, with all the lightnings of parliamentary vengeance, nor asks the mercy, nor deprecates the rage of his accusers: he is ready to leave the throne of half the East, in order to meet their impeachments; he bids them take his life, if any thing worthy of death shall be found in his conduct; nor dare his most inveterate enemies accept the offer.

* Mr. Fox’s speech, Dec. 17, 1783. — Debrett’s Debates, Vol. XII,

the occasion, were first by Governor Johnstone, that if Ministers were determined to remove him, they did not go the right way to do it; and next by the worthy member for Canterbury, who said, that the House was rather thin (forty-three members present) considering the great importance of the resolution. What accession of interest or influence had Mr. Hastings acquired in twenty months, that should support him in the same House of Commons, against such an host of able and powerful opponents? The fact is, he was defended by the people of England, who had sense enough to see through the arts that were practised to depreciate the character of the man who has preserved every thing in Asia, while in other quarters of the globe we have lost every thing; and who asked no other favour from the late Ministers, than to be brought before some tribunal, where he could be permitted to defend himself. During the progress of the bill through the House of Commons, many efforts were made to effect this, and particularly by Governor Johnstone, who declared, repeatedly, that the foundation of the bill being built on the pretended misconduct of Mr. Hastings, it

was as unjust as it was absurd, not to bring forward specific charges against that gentleman. All his efforts were vain, for Mr. Fox continued to declare, that the merits or demerits of Mr. Hastings were not then a subject of consideration, but when the same line was taken in the House of Lords by one noble Peer; the present Lord Chancellor declared, as in truth and justice he was bound to do, that it would be impossible to discuss the bill without entering fully into the merit or misconduct of Mr. Hastings; the consequence was, that Lord Walsingham's reply to the speeches of Lords Carlisle, and Sandwich, was a most complete refutation of every thing that had been said relative to Benares, Oud, and a variety of subjects which had been partially investigated in the Reports of the Select Committee. Not an argument used by the noble Lords who opposed the bill, was answered, or even an attempt made to reply to their objections.

All that had been said of the bankruptcy of the Company, of the misconduct of Mr. Hastings, of the cabals and intrigues between the servants in India and their dependents in England, most happily missed its effect. The bill

was

was deservedly lost, and every day, every hour brings conviction to the mind of every man, that the assertions made by those who supported the bill had no foundation in fact, that they were artfully calculated to catch the prejudices of the moment, with the hope that a measure, big with such important consequences to our happy constitution, would have passed, before the Public were sensible of its pernicious effects.

When Mr. Fox proposed the bill, we laboured under every possible disadvantage. Our Chairman, who was bound to be our protector, was one of the seven Commissioners, and was to have risen upon the ruin of the Company.—If he thought the bill a good one, he was right to support it; but from the moment he took that line, he should have disqualified; it was not, however, till the second reading that he quitted the direction. It was with difficulty we could procure the insertion of any articles in the daily papers (one excepted) which tended to disprove the flagrant falsehoods that were hourly circulating. But when the bill was before the House of Peers, our representations began to have some effect; and I desire the most prejudiced party man in England to contradict me if he can,

when I assert, that every letter received from India in the course of the present year, has fully justified the statements we laid before the Public.

The bill was thrown out by the Lords on the 17th of December, and the change of Ministry followed. In the first tumult that succeeded this event, we now and then heard of Mr. Hastings, and of India. The former was stated to be an usurper, but upon what ground I know not. If the gentlemen who report Mr. Fox's speeches are accurate, he has decidedly affirmed, "that India would be lost without instant reformation; Thirty millions of innocent people were groaning under every species of oppression, and secret influence had destroyed the strongest Administration this country had ever been blessed with." These subjects, however, were very soon abandoned for others of infinitely greater importance to the late Administration. But at length the Parliament was dissolved, without any plan for the government of India being adopted: and here again I must observe, how unfortunate His Majesty's late Ministers were in their predictions last year. It was declared, that without the instant adoption of some plan, India would be lost; a bill must pass before February, and perhaps all the expedition
they

they could use would not save that country. Have not events, universally known, now most completely proved, how fallacious and unfounded these apprehensions were. Peace is completely restored, retrenchments have been made, and the revenues greatly improved; where then is "that utter ruin," in which, according to the preamble, we were to be involved, "if an immediate and fitting remedy was not provided."

While the bill, that has lately passed for the better government of India, was under discussion, much was said of the conduct of Mr. Hastings, and the influence he had acquired in this kingdom; his disobedience of orders, and contempt of superior authority, were frequently mentioned.

With respect to Mr. Hastings's influence in England, whatever may be the degree of it, I can safely assert, that it has been fairly and honourably acquired, and that he may glory in it; that there never was a man in a public station, so totally unconnected with the parties which divide this kingdom as Mr. Hastings is, that he has neither courted Mr. Fox, nor Mr. Pitt, and all he has ever required has been, fairly and
openly

openly to be supported if he deserves support, or to be recalled if thought unworthy of confidence; he has never sought to preserve his station by cabal and intrigue, and has ever held that bold, decided language in Bengal, which every man of spirit must esteem him for. That Mr. Hastings has, by corruption, by bribery, or by any means whatever that would degrade the character of a gentleman, obtained influence of any kind in England, I solemnly deny;—not a shadow of a proof has been offered to convince the world, that he has resorted to such base means of support. Two or three very good things, indeed, have been said, as to the number of Indians now in Parliament, but I have proved, that there were precisely the same number in the last; the only difference is, that the balance was then in favour of Mr. Fox, and now it is on the side of Mr. Pitt. It has also been wittily observed, that the Treasury Bench was under the India Bench in the last session, but here, again, I cannot help recollecting, that I have seen General Smith, Captain Sir Henry Fletcher, and Mr. Jacob Wilkinson upon that Bench, and I cannot help thinking, that Mr. George Vansittart, Colonel Call, and myself, were as well intitled

to all those seats, as the gentlemen who formerly occupied them.

Mr. Hastings has been accused, in general terms, of disobedience of orders, and Mr. Fox attributed the wars in India to his disregard of the instructions he received from home ; — but from this charge Mr. Dundas most completely defended him, by proving, that whether the Maratta war was politic or not, so far as Mr. Hastings was concerned in it, he was fully justified by the express orders of the Court of Directors, — and he might have gone farther, for those orders had the express sanction of his Majesty's Ministers ; though one set of gentlemen appear now to be totally ignorant, not only of this circumstance, but of the very important intelligence transmitted to Bengal by Mr. Elliot, and inserted in the Appendix to the Sixth Report of the Secret Committee. — I have already detailed the events which gave rise to the Rohilla war in 1773, and it was commenced, and ended in six months. These are the only hostilities in which we have borne a part in Bengal during the last twenty years, — but a stranger, who was to read the late parliamentary debates, would really suppose we had
been

been engaged in perpetual war in Bengal ;— though in truth, at no period of the modern history of Indostan, has that country enjoyed so long a peace, as since the English acquired the government.

It was asserted *, that Mr. Hastings disobeyed a peremptory order for the restoration of Cheyt Sing, but no orders of this kind ever were sent ; and absurd, and mad I might almost say, as the conduct of the late Ministers, with respect to India, has been, I can scarcely conceive it ever was in contemplation to restore him. — The whole of the proceeding relative to Cheyt Sing was strictly consonant to the constitution of the government under which he lived. — He has been ranked here amongst the native princes of India, but his family owed its consequence entirely to the English. His father, Bulwant Sing, was originally a petty zemindar in the district of Juanpore, and paid about four thousand rupees a year to the government : he then became collector or farmer of a district under his sovereign Sujah Dowlah, and at length was appointed the collector of Benares. — In this

* Mr. Fox's speech, 16th of July.

situation we found him when Sujah Dowlah was marching to invade Bengal. — We protected him against the vengeance of his Sovereign in 1764, and he was confirmed in the zemindary, by the treaty of Allahabad, in 1765. — From that time to the day the sovereignty of Benares was transferred to the Company, Sujah Dowlah required military assistance from Bulwant Sing and his son Cheyt Sing, whenever his forces took the field, and he received it*. — We made a similar demand when the war broke out with France, and Cheyt Sing promised to comply with it.—That he evaded his promise I attribute entirely to the dissensions in our councils and his expectation of a change in the government.

In this business of Cheyt Sing there is a circumstance that, I confess, surprises me exceedingly, which is this: The gentlemen who have argued upon it seem totally to forget that the demand of money had been made three successive years previous to the insurrection, and compliance enforced by military execution. —

* For proof of this, see the evidence given by Colonel Harper to the Select Committee in 1781, long before the insurrection at Benares.

A very particular detail of each year's proceedings was transmitted to England in triplicate. Did his Majesty's late Ministers, or did one gentleman in the direction ever give an opinion that Mr. Hastings and his council had violated the national faith by demanding, on the part of the Company, military assistance from their vassal Cheyt Sing? — Certainly they did not, nor was such an idea ever entertained till it became the fashion to decry the character of Mr. Hastings. — Yet Mr. Gregory and Sir Henry Fletcher were in the direction at the period when the demands were made, and the consequences communicated. Lord North was the Minister, too, at the time. — Shall these gentlemen be excused for their conduct, and shall Mr. Hastings now be calumniated? He and his Council acted right. — As guardians of the British interest in India, they demanded what, in their idea, was the Company's right; but if there were men in office in England of a different opinion, as it seems there were by their subsequent conduct, they are criminal in not protesting against a measure which was deemed a violation of the national faith.

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The other instances of disobedience of orders which have been quoted were the not sending Mr. Bristow to Oud and Mr. Fowke to Benares. — Is there a man of common sense in England who can now entertain a doubt upon this subject? These gentlemen were made the instruments of a party, and Mr. Pitt may as fairly be accused of criminality for not keeping Mr. Sheridan or Mr. Richard Burke in the Treasury, as Mr. Hastings has been for declining to send Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke to Benares and Oud, at the moment when every newspaper in Indostan contained accounts that these appointments were made in consequence of a determination at home to dismiss Mr. Hastings, and that his dismissal might hourly be expected. — I confess the idea is so repugnant to common sense, of continuing a man at the head of an empire, and refusing him at the same time the privilege of appointing those who are to fill the first political stations in it, that I am astonished how a gentleman of Mr. Fox's talents can take that ground. — Mr. Hastings stated it fairly in Bengal. — The bill lately passed has stated it fairly too. — Obedience to orders is positively enjoined, — but

in instances where orders are disobeyed, the proof of the necessity for such disobedience must be full, or punishment will follow. — Such was the language of Mr. Hastings. — He never expected a repetition of the orders relative to Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke. — He assigned his reasons for acting as he had done, and, if they were not satisfactory, he expected dismissal himself.

Critical, indeed, was our situation when this business was agitated. The Carnatic had just been invaded: The peace with the Marattas was not concluded; a French armament was on its way to India; and Sir Eyre Coote, with a large reinforcement, was on the point of proceeding to Madras. At this moment, Mr. Francis proposed that Mr. Bristow should be sent to Oud, agreeable to the order of the Directors. I defy any man living to controvert the reasons assigned by Mr. Hastings, for refusing to carry the order then into execution. Sir Eyre Coote equally felt the impolicy of the measure, but he had committed himself, and therefore agreed to it, wishing Mr. Hastings to adopt some plan that should tend to prevent any bad effects from the appointment. Our situation
growing

growing more desperate in India, Mr. Hastings recalled both Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke. It was hard to bring him to a personal contest with two junior servants of the Company. Surely in the situations they filled, it was sufficient to say, that having been sent there by his opponents, when party was at the highest in Bengal, they could not be supposed to be his particular choice, though he wished to do them no injury, and was desirous of employing them in any other line.—The intelligence of the removal of these gentlemen, arrived in England at the very time* when we were reasonably alarmed by the prodigious efforts which France was making to dispossess us of India. Lord North was then the Minister, and Mr. Sullivan the Chairman of the Directors. They had too much good sense to think of weakening the Government of Bengal, at that critical moment, by agitating a personal question. But though the state of India became still more desperate, when the Rockingham Administration came in, yet the Select Committee, and a bare majority of the Directors, cordially co-operated in bringing forward every measure that could diminish the credit of the Government

* December, 1781.

of Bengal, or weaken its exertions for the public service. While Mr. Burke did me the honour to examine me on the business of Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke, Mr. Gregory and Sir Henry Fletcher were ordering their restoration, and censuring the conduct of Mr. Hastings in the harshest language. I think Mr. Fox once observed, during the late war, that Lord North and Lord Sandwich could not do the business of France more effectually than they did, had they been bribed to the service. I am sure I can apply this remark to the conduct of the Rockingham Administration, respecting India in 1782.

It has been insinuated, that Mr. Hastings's motive for disobeying the orders of the Court of Directors, was in order to strengthen his Parliamentary-interest at home, by providing for Gentlemen who had great and powerful connections here; but surely there never was a more unfounded charge than this is. Mr. Bristow's connections in England were very powerful. He had two near relations in Parliament, Lord Westcote and the late General Fraser. He was patronized by Lord North's Administration. Mr. Middleton, on the other hand, was scarcely known in England except to Mr. Gregory, who

who had taken so hostile a part against the Governor-General: Mr. Bristow came out at a time when his Lordship was desirous of supporting the Governor-General. If Mr. Hastings had studied to strengthen his own interest at home, he could not have done it more effectually than by patronizing Mr. Bristow.

Mr. Fowke was nearly related to Gentlemen with whom Mr. Hastings had passed the early part of his life. It was neither for his interest, nor his ease to remove him, nor was it probable that he would be in a situation to want the service of Mr. Markham's friends in England: That Gentleman had been his private secretary; he thought him the best qualified for the residency of Benares, at the very critical minute in which he appointed him: but surely any candid man, who considers the case, will be convinced that Mr. Hastings neither acted from motives of enmity to Mr. Fowke, nor in order to insure the good offices of the Archbishop of York in Great Britain. I do not know a single instance in which Mr. Hastings has attended either to the mean gratification of personal resentment, or to the establishment of a powerful interest in England, by the disposal of patronage

nage in India. If the conduct and characters of the civil, and military servants who have been peculiarly employed by him, are scrutinized, it will be found that no man in a public station, has been more fortunate in distinguishing and employing in the public service men of honour and abilities than Mr. Hastings; and that he has never been at the pains to enquire whether their connections in England were powerful or not *. It is the peculiar fate of Mr. Hastings to be accused by one set of men, of wasting the public money for private purposes, and by another, of being totally inattentive to the recommendations of those who have the power of supporting him at home.

In the course of the proceedings in Parliament on India affairs, the terms usurper and delinquent have been applied to Mr. Hastings; and Mr.

* To prove this I could bring many instances. Mr. Shore is one of the number; that Gentleman is called by Mr. Burke a "Creature of the Governor-General," because he was the leading member in the management of the Revenue of Bengal, during the absence of Mr. David Anderson. But the truth is, that Mr. Shore had always lived in social intimacy with Mr. Francis, and was patronized by Mr. Hastings, from the high opinion he entertained of his abilities in the Revenue Line, without the smallest regard to his political opinions, or connections.

Mr. Dundas in particular, has been called upon to proceed against him as a delinquent. I could wish the public would attend to a curious fact, which that gentleman stated in the most direct and manly terms. He said, there were gentlemen present, who knew that he had been applied to formerly, to proceed against Mr. Hastings as a delinquent, but that he had peremptorily refused to do so; and for the best reason in the world, because he did not believe Mr. Hastings was a delinquent, nor had he ever thought him one: That he proposed his removal, from an opinion that he had forfeited the confidence of the native Princes of India, and that it was necessary, as a step preparatory to peace.—I can aver, that this is no new idea of Mr. Dundas; for, upon a former occasion, while the Marratta peace was depending, he declared his intention of removing Mr. Hastings by bill; but he expressly stated, that it was upon the idea of its being a measure of expediency, and not from an opinion of his delinquency. It is very necessary this circumstance, should be attended to, because a party in this country have wished to speak of the two Committees, as if they perfectly coincided in their

sentiments of Mr. Hastings, yet nothing can be more dissimilar than their opinions, and their conduct. Every thing that Mr. Dundas thought Mr. Hastings could not do, he has actually accomplished, in spite of the obstructions which were thrown in his way, by the miserable politics of this country ; so that every cause of objection to Mr. Hastings is removed, and it is no discredit to Mr. Dundas, to acknowledge that he was mistaken, or, that though his reports are fair and impartial, the conclusions he drew from them are contradicted by subsequent events.

But the Reports of the Select Committee go upon very different ground ; they certainly were intended to fix a very great degree of criminality upon Mr. Hastings. The essence of all these Reports is contained in Mr. Burke's printed speech of the 2d of December last, in which that gentleman fairly and fully appealed to the tribunal of the Public, and before the same respectable tribunal I also appeared.—To mere declamation I cannot reply ; but when positive assertions are made, they are capable of proof, or contradiction. I have proved, by facts which are not to be controverted, that Mr. Burke

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has mistated a great variety of subjects; amongst the rest may be mentioned "The Rohilla War;" "the Maratta War;" "Mr. Hastings's Treatment of the Mogul," "the Vizier," "the Begums of Oud;" "Disobedience of Orders:" Management of the Revenues; the Opium Contract; and "the Bullock Contract:" I have fully replied to, and I have fully refuted all these charges: though it is a peculiar hardship attending Mr. Hastings, that while the most powerful, and the ablest men in this kingdom have been diligently employed in effecting his ruin, they have declared, that his conduct was not the object of enquiry; and even the Ninth Report, which, from the first page of it to the last, (I mean Mr. Debrett's Report) is the most intemperate libel against him that ever was published, has the following passage:—"The Reports of your Committee are *no charges*, though they may possibly furnish matter for charge."

Since I am upon the subject of the Reports of the Select Committee, I cannot avoid taking notice of a circumstance which I have publicly mentioned—that the evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Stuart, a gentleman who had been examined two days by the Select Commit-

tee, was completely suppressed. The Tenth Report was made in order to prove that Mr. Hastings had been guilty of a breach of public faith, in withdrawing the Company's guarantee from the Begums of Oud, by which means, the Vizier had re-assumed their Jaghires, and acquired possession of his father's treasures. Upon the subject of the Begums, I had the honour to be examined, and my evidence is entered in the Appendix to the Tenth Report. Lieutenant-colonel Harper (who quitted India in 1773) was also examined, and his evidence is entered. Colonel Stuart was also examined, who had then just arrived in England, (February, 1783) and appeared peculiarly calculated to give material information, by having commanded a detachment in the Vizier's country ; but not the smallest reference is made to his evidence in the Report, *and it is not entered in the Appendix.* In short, it remains at this moment amongst the mass of minutes taken by the Select Committee.

Colonel Stuart was examined on the 19th and 20th of February, 1783 ; and in answer to the questions put to him, he said, that he had served in India for many years, that he had commanded a detachment for ten months in Rohilcund, that
 he

he never heard complaints of exactions by sepoy
 or officers in our service, from the Zemindars or
 inhabitants; that he left Oud in June, 1781,
 the cultivation of the country was impaired from
 the time he first knew it; — that the Nabob
 Vizier had complained to Mr. Middleton, that
 his resources were much decreased, and that he
 wished to strike off the heavy burthen of the Jag-
 hirdars; — that he thinks Mr. Middleton men-
 tioned this to him in the latter end of 1780; —
 that it was currently reported and believed, that
 ever since a few months after the late Vizier's
 death (in 1775), both the Begums, and the
 Nabob's Uncles were all combined in a scheme
 against the British interest: — he heard that some
 correspondence, explanatory of that inimical
 disposition, had fallen into our hands: — he
 thinks (in 1777) Zabita Cawn, the son of Nad-
 jub Ul Dowlah, sent an ambassador to the Vizier
 with a paper, said to be the original of a confe-
 deracy entered into by the different Powers of
 India, to act in concert with the French, to ex-
 pel the British from India; and that the Begums
 and Uncles, his relations, were said to be con-
 cerned in it: — that this circumstance was told
 him by the ambassador of Zabita Cawn; that he
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does not know of any act of hostility committed ; but Nudjeff Cawn declared his intention of entering the Vizier's country in a hostile manner, and as he commanded the Western Province, he took every precaution to frustrate his intentions : that Nuzeph Cawn never did enter the country in an hostile manner, as he knows of ;—that he does not know the military force of the Begums, but thinks they could not have raised two regiments of sepoy :—that the Vizier attributed the decline of his country, to the specie being drawn from it ; that the cause of that drain was, *the subsidies paid to the Company, and the public debts due by the late Vizier to the Company ; and that there was a constant flow of treasure from Oud to Bengal* : — that the Vizier did complain of the distress brought upon him by the number of troops kept in his country ; and that, in consequence, they were recalled from Rohilcund and Futtygur ; and several English gentlemen were also recalled :—*That he first heard of the indisposition of the Begums to our Government, a very few months after the death of Sujah Dowlab (in 1775)* : — That he does not know of any Treaty entered into by the English to protect the Begums in possession of their property : — that

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when the ambassador of Zabita Cawn made the communication to him, he passed through his camp, and paid him a complimentary visit :— that he did not communicate this intelligence to Mr. Hastings, as the ambassador told him it had been communicated to the Resident at Lucknow, which he believed, or he should certainly himself have sent intelligence of it to the Council General.

These are some of the material parts of Colonel Stuart's evidence; and surely it applies infinitely more to the subject matter of the Tenth Report, than any part of my evidence, or that of Colonel Harper's, but *it was wholly suppressed*. Shall I not then rejoice that a tribunal is established, which will supersede this mode of investigation? — The injustice of the proceeding can only be equalled by its absurdity, unless the fact were really as it is stated to be in the Ninth Report: — “That the Committee makes no charge.” — But is that the case? I appeal to the good sense of every man in England to determine that it is not. — A committee is appointed, with power to send for papers, to examine evidences, and to draw up Reports. — Under these powers they examine several gentlemen as to a particular

particular subject: one of them, an officer of high rank and character, is asked a number of questions relative to the state of Oude, and the conduct of the Begums: his replies tend very fully to confirm what Mr. Hastings has asserted, and to justify his conduct towards those ladies: but the whole is suppressed. From no part of the Tenth Report, could the world suppose that there is such a man, as Lieutenant-colonel Robert Stuart, in existence. But as the Reports are no charges, this is deemed of small consequence; and whenever a charge is made, say the Reporters, "It will be at the discretion of the party accused, to call for, and for the discretion of the House of Commons to institute such proceedings, as may tend finally to condemn or acquit." 9th Report, page 33.—I hope every man of honour will attend to the manner in which this doctrine is applied.

A Report thus imperfect, thus partial, is sent into the world. The friends of Mr. Hastings are not to reply to it, because "the Committee make no charge," and his hour of trial is not come: yet every thing that Mr. Fox has said of Mr. Hastings's conduct to the Vizier and the Begums, he actually drew from this partial
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and imperfect Report. — How often was it observed, while his India bill was depending. “ If
 “ any man thinks that the most flagrant enormities have not been committed in India, let
 “ him look to the Reports upon your table.” Such was the language in both Houses, till the Lord Chancellor, with a dignity and spirit becoming his high character, declared, “ That to
 “ such Reports he would pay as much attention
 “ as to the History of Robinson Crusoe.”

There is not a syllable in the Reports, there was not a sentence uttered while Mr. Fox's bill was before the House of Commons, that had a reference to depending events, which has not been contradicted by the latest advices from India. How much has been said and written of the miserable state of Oud, of the oppression the Vizier laboured under from Mr. Hastings, and of his being compelled by the Governor General to plunder the Begums. The balance due from the Vizier to the Company, was pronounced to be a desperate debt, and the unfortunate Directors were accused of audacity for presuming to include it in their accounts — We now find that the Vizier, his Ministers, and the principal people

of his court, place the most implicit reliance on the justice and good faith of Mr. Hastings — That above eight lacks of rupees of his balance were actually paid in February last, and undoubted security given for the discharge of the whole debt. It is proved, that at the repeated and earnest request of the Vizier, Mr. Hastings consented to his resumption of the Begum's Jaghires, and that upon his request they have since been restored to him. We now find that every rupee of the Vizier's debt will be realized, and without our having recourse to those dreadful means for its recovery which a warm imagination painted in such glowing colours, and described as the common mode by which debts were recovered in India.

It was asserted that in the Maratta peace, we had laid the foundation of a new war — but will any man now regard such an assertion? Much was said of Mr. Hastings' permitting the Vizier to plunder Fyzoolla Cawn, and it was made the subject of a Report, but the engagement with him has been faithfully observed, and he has lately applied to Mr. Hastings to assist him in the securing the succession of his Jaghire to his eldest son — In no instance does it
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it appear, that* we are execrated in India, or that our government is deemed a curse by the natives — Men who know as little of India, as I do of the Orkneys, have repeatedly declaimed upon this fruitful subject, while the popular prejudices were strong; but who is there of any information, who does not know, that from the death of Aurungzebe, to the total destruction of the Mogul empire by the invasion of Nadir Shah, India was a scene of blood and rapine — To that period indeed, a period of near fifty years, many of the descriptions that I have heard would in part apply; but are the countries under the immediate management of the English deserted or laid waste? Will any man who travels through Bengal and Bahar, seriously say with the compiler of the Ninth Report, that the inhabitants are reduced to the lowest state of depression and misery—Yet by such flowery declamation were the People of England for a time misled — In all the Reports of the Select Committee, in all the speeches upon the management of Indian revenue, not a line or a word

* See Parliamentary Debates while the rejected India bill was depending.

has appeared in honour of a man who deserves so much of his country as the late Mr. Cleveland — That gentleman had the glory of subduing by mildness and humanity a barbarous and savage race of men — the inhabitants of the western mountains of Bengal — These people were not to be conquered by force of arms, and they committed continual depredations, plundering the villages on the plains, murdering the inhabitants, attacking boats upon the Ganges, and cutting off passengers from time to time. — During the country government many attempts were made, if not for their extirpation, at least for their subjection, but they are now become obedient and useful subjects — They cultivate their lands, subsist upon its produce, and yield a revenue to the Government. Mr. Cleveland fell a sacrifice to his unremitting attention to the office he held, the collector of the revenues of Boglipoor; and Mr. Hastings has paid the only tribute he could pay to so valuable a man, by ordering a monument to be erected to his memory, in a country where while living he was so much esteemed, and where his death is lamented by Europeans and natives of every rank.

Even

Even the merit of Mr. Cleveland could not secure us from the severity of Mr. Burke's remarks; but if he really learnt his lesson from Mr. Francis*, and spoke from his works as from a brief, I am sure that gentleman must have told him, that great as Mr. Cleveland's merits were, he was not the only gentleman in Bengal whose abilities and integrity would do honour to any service in the world. — Could Mr. Francis inform Mr. Burke that “ Our conquest
“ there (in Bengal) is as crude as it was the
“ first day,” — Impossible, I think; and yet Mr. Burke avows not only that he himself, but every member of the late House of Commons who learnt any thing good, learnt it from Mr. Francis.

Much has been said of the influence Mr. Hastings possesses in England; and that though not personally present†, he appeared this year in the House of Commons by his representa-

* This man, whose deep reach of thought, whose large legislative conceptions, and whose grand plans of policy, make the most shining parts of our Report, from whence we have all learned our lessons, if we have learned any good ones; this man, from whose materials those gentlemen who have least acknowledged it, have yet spoken as from a brief, &c.

† Mr. Francis's speech of the 2d of July.

tives. An expression of this kind can only be calculated "*ad captandum vulgus*," and even there will miss of its effect; for of the whole number of India gentlemen who sit in Parliament, there is not one (myself excepted) in the success of whose election Mr. Hastings was in the smallest degree interested. He has not even contributed a shilling towards the expence of the Westminster election. There was a time when speeches, "full of pointed satire," had a very great effect; but Mr. Hastings's character is fortunately now so far fixed with the Public, that they will require positive charges to be brought and fully proved, before they condemn a man who has preserved an empire to Great Britain. Hitherto every charge against him has been found to originate in ignorance, or prejudice.

I have been much surprised to hear gentlemen, confessedly of great abilities, express a wish that we had never acquired territorial possessions in India, and to hear them assert, that we are execrated by the natives; that our Government has been a grievance and a curse to them. It is a satisfaction to reflect, that we never attempted acts of hostility until we were wantonly

wantonly attacked. In our progress to empire have we been guilty of those horrid cruelties which are a disgrace to other European nations, who have acquired kingdoms in India, and America? Mr. Burke seems to acquit us here; but he says, "It is our protection that destroys India." I never yet met with a native of Bengal or Bahar in the middling or lower class of men, who did not declare that he preferred being under the English Government to any other. The sentiment, I believe, is universal, except amongst that order of men with whose advantages, stations, and views, we must necessarily have interfered; I mean the great Mahometan officers; and except we were to expel all the Mussulmen from Indostan, of what advantage would it be to the Aborigines of the country, that all Europeans were driven out of it? I know not by what right Tamerlane acquired or the descendants of Tamerlane possessed the empire, but by conquest: they retained it for many centuries. The Mogul empire was at length destroyed by Nadir Shah's invasion. From that period, till the tyrant, Surajah Dowlah, attacked the British factory in Calcutta, we are told by an impartial historian,

rian *, that “ the country was torn to pieces
 “ by civil wars, and groaned under every spe-
 “ cies of domestic confusion. Villainy was
 “ practiced in every form ; all law and religion
 “ were trodden under foot ; the bands of private
 “ friendship and connections, as well as of so-
 “ ciety and government, were broken, and
 “ every individual, as if amidst a forest of wild
 “ beasts, could rely upon nothing but the
 “ strength of his own arms.”

Will any man who reads this description, and knows any thing of the state of Bengal under the English, seriously assert, that our Government has been a curse, and that we were execrated throughout the country ? The East-India Company have obtained no advantages by the acquisition of territory in India ; but great and important have been the benefits resulting to the State from our Indian possessions, in the increase of customs and excise, in the quantity of treasure brought into the kingdom, and by our being enabled to carry on the trade to China without draining this kingdom of specie, which it now could ill afford to part with, and by the

* Colonel Dow.

large sums paid at different periods to Government by the East-India Company.

It seems, however, now to be allowed, that it would be carrying Quixotism to too great a length, were we to abandon a country which we have so nobly struggled to preserve; — and the next question naturally was, What would be the best mode of government for India?

* The plan of the late Ministry was, to fix a strong Government at home, to be constantly under the eye of Parliament, possessing complete power both at home and abroad, to make all appointments, and to be looked up to in India as *the Government*.

There is a very curious passage in the Ninth Report, which, I confess, surprized me exceedingly when I read it first: “that a senior
“ merchant in Bengal was not a servant of the
“ Supreme Council, as Mr. Hastings hazards
“ to call him, but their fellow servant.” — Men, who could for a moment entertain an opinion so absurd, may well be supposed capable

* Their plan was to establish a board, to consist of seven Persons, who should be invested *with full power to appoint and displace officers in India, and under whose controul the whole Government of that country should be placed.*

Mr. Fox's speech, 18th November, 1783.—Debrett's Debates, vol. XII. page 43.

of joining in a plan for fixing the government of India, in Parliament-street Westminster; but such a Government could not possibly have lasted six months: destroy the energy and the vigour of *the Government in India*, and you will soon lose the country. The rejected plan was admirably adapted for such a purpose. The whole of the reasoning in support of this measure was so fallacious, that men must now wonder how it could have been attended to;—In truth, the old and wise system of the Company, (under which the Duke of Richmond well observed, they flourished to so great a degree) would never have been trenched upon, but from a mischievous attempt to extend the power of patronage at home. Mr. Pitt has had good sense enough to see this, and virtue enough to provide a remedy for the growing evil. In the time of Lord Clive, of Mr. Verelst, and Mr. Cartier, and for the first thirty months of Mr. Hastings's government, there never existed an idea in Leadenhall-street of appointing gentlemen abroad to specific posts*. Those upon the spot are the proper judges of merit, and the only way to make

* A secretary, accountant, and mint-master, were appointed from hence to Bengal in former years, and their appointments occasioned much discontent in India.

a Government respected and obeyed, is to have in its possession the power of reward and punishment. The Directors reserved to themselves the privilege of appointing civil servants to their settlements, but they wisely left it to the Governors and their Council, to employ them. When the regulating bill passed in 1773, and the Minister began to taste the sweets of Indian patronage, the good old rules of the service were broken down. Then it was that party, cabal, and intrigue, were felt in every department of the service, both at home and abroad. Then it was that the Governor General of India was forced into a personal contest with two junior servants; and now Mr. Hastings is accused of temerity, for hazarding to call a senior merchant a servant of the Supreme Council, instead of their fellow-servant.

To complete this system of absurdity, it was proposed, on the 18th of November, to fix the government of India here. The gentlemen abroad would then indeed have been fellow-servants, but how there could have been vigour in the government, how there could have been obedience to orders, how the army could have been commanded, how the revenues collected, how a dominion preserved, even

for six months, I cannot comprehend. The Minister of this country, while we could keep India, would have enjoyed a degree of power and pre-eminence hitherto unknown; since the whole patronage of the East, as well as an extensive patronage at home, would have been vested in his commissioners. — The defect of this system is now fully seen, and was never more forcibly exposed than by Lord Stormont, who voted against the former bill, in a speech upon Mr. Pitt's bill. — His Lordship observed, that the way to preserve and to govern India was to have a strong government established in that country, under the control of a stronger Government here. — By no other system can India be preserved — But was that the system of the compiler of the Ninth Report, or the system which the late Ministers meant to establish? Can they mean to fix a strong government in India, who call a junior merchant the fellow servant of the Governor General of India, and accuse the latter of presumption for endeavouring to support the dignity of his station? The government of India must be in India, and the servants of the Company abroad must look up to the governments upon

upon the spot — But on the other hand, every deviation from orders, every act of oppression or injustice, must be severely punished ; for in proportion as the powers delegated to the governments are strong, and strong they must of necessity be, in proportion must be their responsibility — But the spirit of despotism at home, and equality abroad which the India bill of the late Ministry meant to establish, was calculated to overthrow the Constitution of this country, and to deprive us of all we possess in Asia.

If any thing had been wanting to establish complete anarchy in Bengal, the bill for the better government of the territorial possessions and dependencies was admirably calculated to effect it — By one clause, the Company would have been deprived of a revenue of 600,000l. a year, collected now without oppression or injustice — By other clauses, innumerable landholders would have been dispossessed or subject to vexatious contests, and by another clause, Englishmen who have served their country with honour to themselves, and advantage to the State, were to be deprived of their franchise, and not permitted to sit for a certain

certain period in the House of Commons. — Perhaps this clause was introduced to prevent Mr. Hastings from contaminating a late virtuous assembly on his arrival in England.

The clause of Mr. Pitt's bill which obliges every man serving in India to declare the amount of his fortune has been deemed a harsh one. It is a sacrifice to the delusion of the moment, I presume, but if it were extended to contractors, commissaries, dealers in loans, and men of various descriptions here, who have grown rich from the public purse, during the late calamitous war, I fancy the world would be convinced that more money may be acquired in England in a week, than in India in twenty years. — Harsh, however, as this clause may be deemed, it is mild indeed, compared to that in a rejected bill, which precluded an Englishman from the honour of serving his country in Parliament, and from the privilege of defending himself against the efforts of ignorance and malice, which I have often seen combined to calumniate men of irreproachable characters.

Many insinuations have been thrown out, as if Mr. Hastings depended upon the support of the present Ministers, or of those possessed of
still

still greater power than the ministers. These are insinuations only, and are totally unfounded. Mr. Hastings's support was from the public at large. — There has, indeed, been some difference in the conduct of the late and the present Ministers. From what has already passed, I presume Mr. Hastings will not now be condemned unheard, as he would have been last winter,—but the present ministers are responsible to the nation, for the good government of India; and if there is any thing in the character, or the conduct of Mr. Hastings which renders him unfit for his station, they are bound to recal him, and to punish him. Mr. Hastings has never shrunk from responsibility; he has never attempted, by the low arts of cabal and intrigue, to preserve his situation, nor has he descended to the meanness of deprecating the vengeance of those who were inclined, last winter, to exert their power to the utmost, in order to crush him.

Determined as his Majesty's Ministers were, in 1782, to remove Mr. Hastings, what could have saved him but the high opinion in which his constituents held him? Did they act illegally or absurdly, in differing in opinion from a
majority

majority of forty-three members of the House Commons? Will any man of common sense believe, that if at that period, or since, any one, even the most minute of the charges brought against Mr. Hastings, could have been substantiated, a bill for his removal would not have been carried without a dissenting voice? In the rejected bill, was there a clause for Mr. Hastings's removal? Though his supposed misconduct was stated to have produced the necessity for so strong a measure as that confessedly was, yet the bill actually left Mr. Hastings the Governor General of Bengal, until the seven mighty monarchs should determine his fate in close divan; for we have since been given to understand, (*credat Judæus!*) that it was uncertain whether Mr. Hastings was to be removed or not.

If any thing were wanting to expose the fallacious basis on which the rejected bill was founded, we have ample proof of it in the late advices from India, by which we know that peace and tranquility are restored to every part of it; and to secure us in the possession of that great arm of the empire, we only wanted what I think Mr. Pitt's bill has fully established, a govern-

government, and a strong government in India, under the control of a still stronger government at home.

In the course of our struggles, we have seen the power of the Government of this country unjustifiably exerted to remove Mr. Hastings; and, unsupported by family connections, or Parliamentary interest, but by the mere force of personal character, he has obtained a complete triumph over his opponents. Neither bribery nor corruption were resorted to, in support of him; and however a certain set of gentlemen may attempt to mislead the public by asserting again, and again, that the proprietors are the servants, of the servants in India, and that the whole body is corrupt; yet every man of sense and observation must treat these remarks as childish and absurd. The Proprietors have in fact preserved India to Great Britain, as Mr. Dempster has often declared, who, at the minute the late Ministry condemned the conduct of the Proprietors, and were themselves determined to remove the Governor General, publicly defended them in the House of Commons; and asserted, that he could conceive no act so completely absurd as the removal of

Mr. Hastings, during the war would be, unless General Eliott had been superseded in his command at the moment the Spanish batteries were playing against Gibraltar.

THE END.

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